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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

## MEMORANDUM

### *The Situation in Vietnam*

JCS review(s) completed.

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2 December 1966

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Information as of 1600

2 December 1966

25X

### HIGHLIGHTS

US aircraft struck several major targets in North Vietnam on 2 December and pilots report that bomb damage was heavy. Eight US aircraft were downed over North Vietnam on 2 December.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
Nearly 90 Viet Cong were killed early on 2 December during a four-hour engagement in southern Long Khanh Province (Para. 1). Eleven Communist soldiers were killed in western Pleiku Province as the nine-battalion US Operation PAUL REVERE IV continued its reconnaissance and surveillance mission near the Cambodian border (Para. 2).

25X

The mass kidnaping episodes in the Mekong Delta last month are part of the Viet Cong's continuing efforts to indoctrinate large segments of the population (Paras. 6-9). MACV has accepted another North Vietnam regiment in its OB (Paras. 10-11).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:  
The Constituent Assembly on 1 December began discussion of the form of government it will propose under the constitution (Para. 1). The Directorate has reportedly decided not to give in to the assembly on a complete relaxation of the Directorate's current powers of constitutional revision (Para. 2).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:  
US aircraft attacked targets in the Hanoi area on 2 December inflicting major damage to POL storage facilities (Paras. 1-5).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:  
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

VI. Other Major Aspects:

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The Cambodian Government has issued its first official response to recent South Vietnamese statements regarding Viet Cong use of Cambodian territory (Paras. 5-7).

2 December 1966



I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Units of the US 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment successfully engaged a Viet Cong battalion in Long Khanh Province early on 2 December. The US force was on a routine reconnaissance patrol along National Highway One about 45 miles northeast of Saigon when it encountered a 400-man Communist force. Tactical air strikes supported the American soldiers with napalm, explosives, and strafing. Viet Cong losses during the four-hour battle included 88 killed and four weapons captured. American casualties have not been reported; however, press reports indicate US casualties were light with just a few wounded.

2. Eleven Viet Cong were killed during a three and a half hour skirmish between elements of the nine-battalion Operation PAUL REVERE IV and an estimated company-size Communist force in western Pleiku Province early on 2 December. Seven enemy weapons were captured. Six Americans were reported wounded. This long-term reconnaissance and surveillance operation has been sweeping the western portions of Pleiku and Kontum provinces in search of elements of the 1st NVA Division (formerly the 630th). Since the beginning of this phase of the operation, 890 Communist soldiers have been killed and 80 captured compared to 125 Americans killed and 412 wounded.

25X

2 December 1966

I-1

25X

Mass Kidnapings in IV Corps by the Viet Cong

6. The two mass kidnappings of civilians by the Viet Cong in the delta province of Vinh Binh in November apparently were in line with past Viet Cong tactics of forcibly exercising control over the civilian population.

7. According to the province chief, 30 of the persons taken from one of the hamlets last month have been allowed to return. These villagers reported that they were given four hours of indoctrination each day for 18 days.

8. Information available to the province chief indicates that the remainder of the villagers will be held captive because the Viet Cong believe that the presence of noncombatants in this Communist-controlled area will protect it from B-52 strikes. The Viet Cong may also feel that the kidnappings of civilians will frustrate the government pacification effort and prevent establishment of more new life hamlets.

9. Mass kidnappings from government-sponsored hamlets have not been reported elsewhere in the IV Corps area. Kidnaping large numbers of people as was the case in November is, however, unusual. It is not clear from just the two incidents that the Communists intend to continue large-scale kidnappings.

MACV Accepts Another NVA Regiment in OB

10. The 101st "C" Regiment (NVA), with a strength of 1,500 men, has been accepted in the "possible" category of the MACV order of battle. This unit, also known as the Song Lam Regiment, has three battalions

2 December 1966

I-2

-(400 men each) and a headquarters element. It began infiltrating to South Vietnam in January 1966 and arrived in March in Thua Thien Province where it reportedly participated with the 95 "B" NVA Regiment in the assault on the A Shau Special Forces Camp. The 101 "C" unit apparently arrived at its present location in Pleiku Province in II Corps in July 1966.

11. There are now a total of 21 North Vietnamese Army regiments accepted in the order of battle along with 13 Viet Cong regiments. Total North Vietnamese strength in the order of battle now stands at 45,870 men.

2 December 1966

I-3



## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. On 1 December, the Constituent Assembly began a preliminary discussion of the system of government to be established under the forthcoming constitution. A document favoring a straight presidential executive over a modified presidential system was presented to the assembly by a member of the drafting committee. The document suggested that the concurrent establishment of a bicameral legislature, an independent inspectorate, an independent judiciary, and a formal leader of an opposition party would check the potential threat of a dictatorial president. Nevertheless, the idea of a pure presidential system provoked fear among some of the deputies of a return to a situation such as existed under President Diem. Several deputies argued for the inclusion in the future government of a prime minister. This had been previously reported as an alternative to the straight presidential executive. The assemblymen decided that the executive issue was too complex to decide now and voted to hold further discussions on the over-all form of the government before voting on any one aspect.

2. According to a journalist's account which quotes "usually reliable sources," the Directorate has decided not to relax its present amendatory powers over the draft of the constitution which the Constituent Assembly will write. This decision will be formally announced to the assembly next week, the journalist's report added. At stake is whether the military rulers will be able to rewrite portions of the constitution which could have a significant effect on their legal involvement in the next government. The Directorate was petitioned by an assembly committee on 18 November to amend the assembly's establishing decree in order to limit potential Directorate influence over the assembly's work. There have been, however, no reports from members of the inner government circle to suggest that they would soften their approach on the question of constitutional revision.

2 December 1966

II-1



### III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Clearing weather enabled more than 200 US Navy and Air Force aircraft to conduct a coordinated attack on three major targets in the Hanoi area on 2 December. One of the targets was within five miles of Hanoi proper. Bomb damage assessment photography is not yet available, but initial pilot reports indicated that the raids were successful.

2. North Vietnam's two remaining major POL sites at Ha Gia and Can Thon, which provide POL for the airfields at Phuc Yen and Kep, were among the objectives. Navy pilots reported black oily smoke rising to 5,000-feet and many secondary explosions after the raid at Can Thon. No details have been received concerning the air force strike at Ha Gia. The extensive vehicle storage and light industrial area at Van Dien four miles south of Hanoi was also hit by carrier-based planes, and pilots reported "massive damage" with 95 percent of the bombs delivered on target.

3. Eight US aircraft were lost over North Vietnam on 2 December. Four of the eight planes lost are believed to have been lost in the attacks on Ha Gia, Can Thon, and Van Dien. Coordination of the timing of the air force and navy raids, plus saturation of the air defenses in the Hanoi area, probably aided in minimizing US losses. Navy pilots participating in these strikes reported sighting more than 25 SAM firings and heavy anti-aircraft fire. Initial reports from the 7th Air Force indicate that USAF pilots encountered numerous SAMs and an unknown number of MIG aircraft.

4. In addition to the four planes lost during the major strikes, two navy A4s are reported to have been downed by SAMs in the Thanh Hoa area, an air force F4C was lost to unknown causes while

2 December 1966

III-1

escorting an EB-66 near Yen Bai, and an RF4C photo-reconnaissance plane was reported as missing between Hanoi and Haiphong.

5. Hanoi and Peking radios charged on 2 December that US aircraft had bombed and strafed a populated area of Hanoi. Peking called the raids a serious new escalation of the war but neither Hanoi nor Peking threatened specific retaliation. The Communists claimed that 11 US aircraft were shot down during the 2 December raids.

2 December 1966

III-2

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

2 December 1966

IV-V - 1

VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

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2. Rumors that China will not permit use of its southern ports for transshipments to the DRV have not been substantiated. To avoid congestion at Haiphong in June, and immediately following US air attacks on petroleum facilities there, three Soviet tankers delivered cargoes in China for transshipment to North Vietnam. A Rumanian oil shipment apparently was similarly transshipped via a south China port in August.

3. During the past two months there has been no congestion at the port of Haiphong, and Hanoi presumably has used this time to clear out stockpiles which had accumulated in warehouse areas near Haiphong during the March-September period when Communist shipping was maintained at a high rate. Despite sensitivity concerning the vulnerability of Haiphong to air attack, it is likely that Communist ship arrivals will increase again in coming months. The expected upswing will in part reflect deliveries of aid materials negotiated during Le Thanh Nghi's recent swing through the Communist countries.

4. Although reports imply that the aid Nghi procured is military, a good deal of it undoubtedly consists of construction and transportation equipment which supports the North Vietnamese war effort. This type of aid has been delivered primarily by sea, although rail shipments of some vehicles have already been scheduled for early 1967.

5. The Cambodian Government has issued its first official response to recent South Vietnamese statements regarding Viet Cong use of Cambodian territory.

2 December 1966

VI-1

6. An official communiqué--published in Phnom Penh on 2 December--contains standard denials that the Communists use Cambodian territory or that Cambodia is violating its neutrality by actively supporting the Viet Cong. The communiqué also calls for an International Control Commission (ICC) investigation of statements made by South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Tran Van Do that the headquarters element of the Viet Cong 9th Division may have moved into Cambodia during the allies' Operation ATTLEBORO in South Vietnam's Tay Ninh Province. It promised that Phnom Penh would afford the ICC "all facilities" to conduct its investigation.

7. The communiqué, and a subsequent message broadcast on the Cambodian domestic service, portray South Vietnamese statements as an attempt by the US and South Vietnam to lay the groundwork for action against Cambodia.

25X1

25X

2 December 1966

VI-2

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25X1

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